

Flora & Fauna

Pumpkin-Inspired Crafts and Treats

No doubt about it—October is all about pumpkins. Whether you carve out a few to decorate your porch, tastefully arrange smaller pumpkins and gourds for a beautiful centerpiece, or just wear a little extra orange and green, pumpkins can be an inspiration for a lot of fun things this month. Here are a few pumpkin-inspired ideas for the season:

Pumpkin-shaped invitations. Throwing a Halloween bash this year? Why not get your guests in the mood by mailing out some handmade pumpkin-shaped invitations. All you need is some orange and green paper (look for a thicker cardstock for a nicer appearance), a pair of scissors, and a little glue. You can write out the details of your invitation on the pumpkin in black marker, or print something out on your printer. Keep things spooky by mailing your invites in black envelopes (but make sure the addresses are printed on white labels!)

Turn your front door into a jack-o-lantern. Visit your local craft store to pick up a few large sheets of orange and black poster paper and some sticky tack. Cover your door in the orange paper, and then cut out two giant eyes, a nose, and a ghoulish grin from the black paper. Adhere everything to your front door using sticky tack.

Pumpkin pretzels. Delight guests and visitors with sweet mini-pretzel pumpkins! Melt one bag of white chocolate chips according to the package instructions and stir in some orange food coloring. Dip a mini-pretzel into the chocolate and set on a wax-paper-lined tray. Tuck a green M&M into the crook of the pretzel at the top to create the stem. Allow them to cool and dry before transferring to a serving bowl.

Pumpkin-frosted cupcakes. Grab a box of yellow cake mix, a container of vanilla frosting, some orange food coloring, orange sugar sprinkles, and a few green gummy bears.

Bake the cupcakes according to the package instructions. Mix the vanilla frosting with the orange food coloring. Once the cupcakes have cooled, spread the orange frosting on top, and then dust them with the orange sugar sprinkles. Poke a green gummy bear in the top and you’ve got a sweet pumpkin-inspired treat that’s perfect for adults and kids!

You can also try out the delicious pumpkin cupcake recipe later in this issue!

Rock on! Take your kids out for a walk and scavenge for a few large, smooth stones. Bring them home and wash any dirt off using dish soap and a stiff bristle brush. Pick up some orange acrylic paint from your local craft store, a few black permanent markers, and some clear spray sealer.

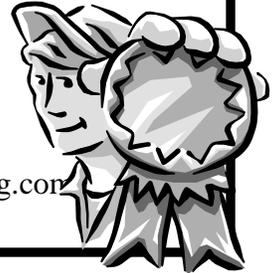
Paint the rocks orange. Once they’ve dried, use the black marker to draw on spooky jack-o-lantern faces. Spray them with the clear sealant to keep the paint from running while they decorate your front porch.

Statewide Carpet Cleaning

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Cleaning Corner:

How to Remove Rust Stains from Vinyl Flooring

Rust stains on a vinyl floor can be tricky to remove. Depending on the age and severity of the stain, it may be permanent.

Try this: Sprinkle baking soda over the stain, and then pour vinegar over the baking soda. Use a stiff scrubbing brush to scrub the area. Wipe the area clean using a damp towel.

Caution: Do not use chlorinated cleaners, such as bleach. This will make the staining worse and can even cause irreversible damage to the floor.

Prevention is key. Wipe up spills right away. Keep metal furniture off the floor by using furniture tabs or tips (found at your local hardware store) under the legs.

October

- 1608 The first prototype of the modern reflecting telescope is completed by Hans Lippershey of Middleburg, Germany
- 1789 George Washington sends proposed Constitutional amendments (the United States Bill of Rights) to the states for ratification
- 1825 The Erie Canal opens, connecting Lake Erie and the Hudson River in upstate New York
- 1950 The comic strip *Peanuts* first appears in 9 newspapers
- 1964 “Oh Pretty Woman” by Roy Orbison is the number one hit on UK music charts
- 1984 Three Russian cosmonauts return to Earth after a record 237 days in orbit

Health Advice: 5 Ways Keep Your Colon Healthy

The colon, also known as the large intestine, is the final part of your digestive tract. This organ has a critical job: it processes waste from the body and absorbs fluids and nutrients. It also contains nearly 60 varieties of bacteria that help with proper digestion, maintain pH balance, and fight off harmful bacteria. A healthy colon is critical to a healthy body. Without proper waste elimination and nutrient absorption, we'd get very sick, very fast.

Excluding skin cancers, colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon and rectum) is the third most common cancer found in men and women in the United States. The lifetime risk of developing colorectal cancer is about 1 in 20. Individuals over 50, those with a family history of colorectal cancer, and those with type 2 diabetes have an increased risk of developing colorectal cancer.

However, there are still plenty of things you can do to improve your colon's health and reduce your overall cancer risk:

1. **Quit Smoking.** We really shouldn't have to say it, but if you're smoking, QUIT! Smoking is known to directly cause a variety of cancers of the body, not to mention high blood pressure, brain aneurisms, strokes, heart disease, and more. The single best thing you can do to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer and improve your health is to quit smoking entirely.
2. **Eat More Fiber.** Fiber is an essential part of a healthy diet. It keeps food waste moving through the digestive tract, ensuring your intestines and colon stay clean. Experts recommend eating 25–35 grams of fiber daily. The best high-fiber foods are fruits and veggies, including black raspberries, bananas, prunes, peas, broccoli, beans, and celery.
3. **Exercise.** Getting at least 30 minutes of exercise a day, even just going for a brisk walk outside every day, has been shown to have surprisingly positive health effects on the body. It gets your heart pumping, your blood moving, and releases awesome endorphins that help you feel good. It can also help relieve constipation and promote better digestion.
4. **Maintain a Healthy Weight.** Obesity, especially in men, is known to increase your risk of developing colon cancer. Excessive belly fat in particular is a key risk factor. Eating a healthy diet and getting plenty of exercise is key to maintaining a healthy weight.
5. **Get Screened.** Testing for colorectal cancer usually starts around age 50. For many, it means a colonoscopy, but there are also other less invasive testing options that look for colorectal risk factors too. Talk with your doctor to see what your options are. Routine screenings for colorectal cancer can help catch problems early before they develop into something much worse later.

Kid Corner: How to Teach Your Child Good Manners

“Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! Mine! Mine! Mine!” While all children go through a selfish phase (or several) growing up, it's our job as parents and caregivers to teach children how to have good manners, not just in public, but at home too. Good manners show the people around you that you care about them and respect them. In turn, good manners given are usually rewarded by good manners received, which makes for much more pleasant social interactions not just during childhood, but into adulthood as well.

Here are some tips for teaching your child how to behave politely:

1. **Demonstrate good manners yourself.** That old expression “Monkey see, monkey do,” comes to mind. When children observe you saying please, thank you, and treating those around you with respect, they are more likely to imitate that behavior. If your child observes you cussing and raising your middle finger to another driver, well, guess what you can expect to see her do when riding her bike with her little friends?
2. **Be consistent.** Teaching a child anything, whether it's how to get dressed, how to tie their shoes, or how to solve a math problem, requires multiple consistent lessons. You will need to gently remind your child to say “Please” and “Thank you” or “Excuse me” over and over and over again.

Here's a general script format to follow: If you ask your child a yes or no question, and they respond with “Yeah” or “Nope,” correct them by asking, “‘Yes, please’ or ‘no, thank you’?” Give them the proper choice of response that you expect to hear. If they ask you a question, “Can I have some candy?” Respond with the manners you expect to hear, “May I have some candy, please?” This technique works with children as young as 18 months to as old as 18 years.

3. **Acknowledge good manners.** Sometimes children can be oblivious to the good manners they receive and simply come to expect that treatment from others without feeling the need to reciprocate. When someone does something courteous for you or your family, point it out to your children, explain why it was so thoughtful, and remind them to thank the person.

“Did you see how that nice gentleman held the door open for us? It was very polite. We should say thank you.” Helping your child recognize the good manners of others will encourage them to “pay it forward” and use those same manners on others. It will also help avoid them taking those manners for granted.

Ingredients – Pumpkin Cupcakes

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp allspice
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp Kosher salt
- 1 stick of butter, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup canned pure pumpkin puree
- 1 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs

Ingredients – Cream Cheese Icing

- 8 oz plain cream cheese
- 2 Tbs butter at room temperature
- 2 Tbs pure maple syrup
- 2 cups powdered sugar

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a muffin pan with paper cupcake liners.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, nutmeg, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
3. In a large bowl, add the butter and sugar. Beat with a handheld mixer until light and fluffy. Add the pumpkin puree and vanilla extract. Slowly beat in the eggs, one at a time.
4. Incorporate the wet and dry mixtures slowly until thoroughly combined.
5. Fill each cupcake liner $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full. Bake for about 20 minutes, until the tops turn golden and a toothpick inserted comes out clean.
6. To make the cream cheese frosting, add the cream cheese, butter, and maple syrup to a large bowl. Beat until creamy. Gradually add the powdered sugar until thoroughly combined.
7. Top the cupcakes with the frosting. Add a few chopped pecans for a garnish.

5 Ways to Automatically Save Money

1. **Set up the right bank account.** Are you paying a monthly fee for your checking or savings account? If so, you should investigate the accounts available at other banks. Many offer free checking accounts and even offer sign-up bonuses simply for opening a new account.
2. **Direct deposit.** Most companies allow employees to directly deposit their paychecks into multiple bank accounts. Set it up right from the start to have your paycheck divided between your primary checking account and your savings account. With the money divided automatically, you won't worry about being disciplined enough to put money into savings yourself later.
3. **Save your raise.** It's amazing how quickly our expenses rise to meet our level of income. Without careful planning, that awesome raise will be gone before you know it, or really have a chance to enjoy it. To make the most out of your extra money, put it all into savings or split it between your savings and retirement investments, such as an IRA or 401(k). Continue living at your old income and let your "extra" money grow into a nice nest egg for the future.
4. **Use a credit card with rewards.** Credit cards with cashback rewards programs are basically giving you *free* money for buying the things you would normally buy anyway. To make this work right, use exactly one credit card for all your purchases, but be sure to pay off the balance in full each month. If you charge \$500 per month on a 1% cash back card, you can earn an extra \$60 a year. These funds roll over year to year, too, accruing for as long as you use the card.

Note: If you struggle to pay off your balance every month, this option is not a good choice for you. Focus on living within your means and getting out of debt first.
5. **Pay bills online.** Most bank websites nowadays make it easy to pay your bills. Just log in, enter your biller's information, type in the payment, and click "send." You'll save the cost of a stamp, plus avoid late fees from forgetting to mail a payment on time. You can schedule a payment through your bank and never give it another thought.

How to Care for a Hardwood Floor

Wood is a natural, beautiful, and timeless design and decorating element. Consistent careful and correct maintenance will ensure it remains that way for years to come. Here are the Do's and Don'ts of proper hardwood floor care:

- **Do** use a walk-off mat or area rug at each entryway to collect dirt and grit that might be tracked in. These tiny particles act like sandpaper and will scratch your floor.
- **Don't** use rubber-backed or non-ventilated mats or rugs as they can cause damage.
- **Do** use cleaners that won't leave a film or residue.
- **Don't** use wax on floors with a urethane finish.
- **Don't** use ammonia cleaners or oil soaps on a wood floor, as they will dull the finish and performance of your floor. These products will also affect the ability to recoat your floor later.
- **Do** use a good quality broom and sweep your floor regularly to pick up grains of dirt and dust. You can use a vacuum cleaner (without a beater bar) to pick up hard-to-reach dirt in between planks and crevices.
- **Do** use a hardwood floor cleaner to remove occasional scuffs or heel marks. Just spray some cleaner on a cloth and lightly rub the stained area. Sticky spots can be cleaned with a damp towel or sponge.
- **Don't** use a wet mop or excessive water to clean your floor. Wood naturally expands when wet, so large amounts of water will cause the wood to swell, crack, or splinter.
- **Do** clean up spills on your hardwood floors as soon as they happen.



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Money Saving Coupon

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Hallway with
cleaning of three
rooms or more.**

*If you can't use this
coupon, Please give it to a friend!*